



Simply Saucer broke up in 1979 after six years of slugging around Ontario. Their only releases were a 7" called "She's a Dig / I Can't Change My Mind" from 1978 and their 1974/5 tapes, which resulted in the Cyborgs Revisited LP and its various re-issues. Original members Edgar Breau and Kevin Christoff recruited new members in

2006/7 and have been playing live shows again. This interview was conducted at CIUT on May 27th, 2007. In March 2008 Simply Saucer released a new CD titled Half Human. Half live on Sonic Unyon. This interview was conducted by Imants, Krumins, and Robert Sikora.

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the name of David Byers who had recently seen the Velvet Underground do an open-air concert at Varsity Stadium. If I'm not wrong, He was really hip to the Velvet Underground and a number of Dutch bands like Wally Tax and the Outsiders, Superstister, and Savage Rose. Dave was into Tim Hardin, a lot of the torch singers, and girl groups from the '60s—An excellent songwriter and a very creative guy, I guess. I met Kevin, the bass player, in high school through my brother Paul. We went to the same high school. We were looking for "a weird bass player." That's what we asked for. We said, "Can he play weird bass?" Kevin goes, "Of course I can play weird bass." He showed up at the practice and he really was listening to what we taught you...

Kevin: Was "Exit" but which Brian took the kick track on the un... into C.S.

ing for the ...

Edgar: Yeah, like these rediscovered... y'know, Mississippi John Hurt or

Joe: Thanks

Edgar: I'm Edgar Breau and I play guitar and lead vocals
 Dan: I'm Dan Winterman, I play guitar and theremin.

Kevin: I'm Kevin Christoff. I play bass.

MRR: We'll go right back to the beginning. 1973 is when your band formed.

That. We were record collecting geeks that all hung out together. We used to buy records at the same store. That's why we were at our good friend Imants' house.

of the day. In some cases all the water is used.

Kevin: Was "Exit" which is about the black off track on the on...
...the on...
...ing for th...

Harmon Road,
which was in
what is now the
Lisier Block.

[illegible]

Edgar: No. Bill Wood's band did not win The Lucky 7 or something like that. Yeah so that's where Rob came out.

Edgar: It was an outdoor... You know my memory is a little shaky here.

Edgar: Yeah. We had our light show in the
broad daylight.

Edgar: The light show was my favorite. I had fun. I had fun.
Bukowski

[illegible]

Keywords: life; life events; life transitions

He had to find a way to pass out the card
and he had to know that he was doing
it. We showed him passed out. We had some
unhappy faces.

MRR: DK, I saw you at that show (the battle of the bands), I picked up the *Hamilton Spectator* ... I didn't even know you guys or anything ... and I read you're playing on the roof in downtown Hamilton. I parked my car at Jackson Square, walked up the stairs, I got to the roof and there are ten people watching you guys, mostly friends, some street people, and I am hearing what I heard tonight.



Edgar: It was a Tannenburg tape recorder. Reel-to-reel. Everything was recorded through the vocal mic. The band and the amplifiers. Everything came out.

Kevin: That should give you an idea of how loud everything was.

Edgar: Yeah. We had very loud vocals with the band in the background. We had six studio tracks that we recorded with the Lanois Brothers in Ancaster in their mother's basement in 1974. We needed a few more tracks so... and we are talking '88 now... I am getting ahead of myself in the story.

MRR: Again this is... You talk about music from that era and this fits in with it...

Edgar: The original studio tracks—the six that we did with Bob and Don Lanois—when our Manager Rick Bissel split from the band he took the tapes with him. He moved to Montreal and eventually ended up in Arabia at the Canadian compound there for Northern Telecom, and the tapes were at the bottom of his closet or something like that for many years. I decided to get in touch with him to try and get the tapes back in '87 or so, and he was good enough to meet me in Burlington and return the tapes. I gave them to Bruce Mowat. Bruce Mowat sent them to Byron Coley who wrote for *Spin Magazine*, and Byron was urging us to release them. He liked them along with Chris Stigliano who writes for *Black To Comm* and *Piff! Magazine*, a well-known zine that comes out of Sharon, Pennsylvania. He was always a big promoter of the band.

MRR: He's on the net now as Blog To Comm as opposed to Black To Comm.

Edgar: So eventually it came out on vinyl and the world finally heard us.

MRR: And it seems to have spiraled from there.

Edgar: The critical kind of.

MRR: Those are the songs that people know, but we will get to some of your later songs as well. I wanted to ask you... Okay, again there are a lot of indie bands around that don't necessarily know the function of a manager. I don't know if you want to take a minute to explain the function of a manager because he booked you all these gigs, which I'm going to ask you about. We have a list of them from *Black To Comm* because Kevin was the archivist. Listen to some of these: Hawksbury District High School, Smith Falls, Sutton High

School, Keenahan, Elmira, Trenton, Carleton Place, Champlain High School in Pembroke. Where are all these places? No disrespect to these places. You have a whole tour in 1975 booked through these things with no indie clubs.

Kevin: They were all high school gigs. The high schools were all doing dances and things. Some of them worked and quite a few of them didn't. That was Rick though.

MRR: So you got some new fans and some people that hated you. Do you have memories of that?

Kevin: We have been pelted with rubber ends, you know the bottoms of tables from gymnastics.

Edgar: They cut our brake line after we played in St. Kitts. They were trying to mangle us.

MRR: They requested "Stairway to Heaven" and things like that.

Edgar: Yeah. The 707 Club, Oakville, they physically picked up our drummer and threw him out of the club after they pulled us off the stage. They just threw us out.

Kevin: After about four songs.

MRR: These were the days when bands just did cover songs, so it was all Led Zeppelin and Doobie Brothers. I guess you didn't convert all that many people.

Kevin: Some of the tapes are interesting though. We have a complete show from Carleton Place. The place was packed with a really rough crowd. When you listen to the tapes you don't hear any applause, which is really weird, but you don't hear anything else. Like you hear people talking, but you don't hear any catcalls or anything like that. And when you listen to the music that we were laying out for them you have to wonder what they were hearing.

Edgar: There was one person that applauded though at the end of it.

MRR: Sam was at Carleton Place with Piers Hemmingsen, his pal in Toronto. You are talking about tapes from those recordings and on the *Cyborgs Revisited* CD it says there are going to be CD-R releases of some of those. Is that still in the works?

Edgar: Just some bootleg kind of.

MRR: It's in your CD there.

Joe: This might have been "manufactured" by someone else.

MRR: I know a few of the archivists played some of the tapes and there is good stuff there. And some of the songs... lets talk about a couple of old songs that are not on *Cyborgs Revisited*. "Ring-a-ling Oh My," "Oh So Much," "Limitless Love," "Clearly Invisible." Are you going to re-record any of these for the new one?

Steve: One of those will make it.

MRR: Any hints?

Steve: Well that's up to Ed.

MRR: I have a bunch of songs written down. "Baby Nova," what about that one?

Edgar: We have thought of that one. "Oh So Much" excuse me guys but I have got to promote my own record—is going to be on my own solo record. It might be out this year. Not on the Saucer album. Some of these we are definitely looking at for the new Saucer album, which is called *Half Human, Half Live*, which is coming out in October of this year.

MRR: Some of *Half Human, Half Live* is going to be live and some studio like you said. It should be great. Did you do any covers at these gigs like you were supposed to do?

Kevin: Which gigs?

MRR: The 1974-1975 gigs.

Kevin: No we didn't.

Edgar: Yeah, we did "Waiting For My Man."

Kevin: Oh yeah. In '75.

Edgar: And "Sweet Jane / Waiting For My Man" medley. I think we did "Rebel Rebel" maybe.

Kevin: We did a few more covers as time went on.

Edgar: We did covers over the years especially near the end there. When we were too drunk to play our own music because it was too complicated so we thought lets just play covers.

MRR: A little question about your instrumentation. John Laplante (Ping Romany)...they had audio generators and things. What was all that?

Edgar: Well that was the Hawkwind influence, because when Hawkwind's first record came out I don't believe they had a synthesizer; they had audio generators, and so David Byers went to the Heathkit manufacturer and came back with two audio generators. I played one at the beginning and John from Ping Romany, actually John was my foster brother—he wanted to join the band so I suggested he find some electronic gizmo to play and we would love to have him aboard. Eventually we got a theremin, which was a Gibson Maestro, and then the Mini Moog to complete it all. KC played the fuzz bass. I hope he's going to play a lot more of it.

Kevin: Since you put it that way, sure.

MRR: Were you aware of other bands at the time? I understand that you were members of Terrapin, the Syd Barrett fan club, and you knew Craig Bell who played with Rocket From The Tombs, and eventually Pere Ubu.

Edgar: Right. Craig and I used to be pen pals. That would be '73 or '74—something like that. He was the first American member of the Syd Barrett Appreciation Society. I was the first Canadian. I discovered that he had a band called the Sauter, and my band's name was Simply Sauter, and then he went on to play for Rocket From The Tombs. From Rocket From The Tombs came Pere Ubu.

MRR: I thought he was in the Mirrors too.

Edgar: Yeah. Richard Lloyd was well aware of that too, because I brought in Craig.

Joe: Oh no. A Richard Lloyd story. Ask Liz in the other room about Richard Lloyd. She already wrote about it.

Edgar: Gotta stay away from the Dream Whip.

MRR: I am going to bring up a few other bands from back then. You always read Velvet Underground, Kinks, T-Rex, Hawkwind. I know Kevin's into the Beatles and Soft Machine. So I am going to throw out a couple of names and anybody

imports, can and boogied on up and caught the Ramones at the Victory or something like that. Midnight show.

Joe: New Yorker.

MRR: Not just Roy Orbison, but other rockabilly. I guess this was one of your musical interests a little bit.

Joe: Johnny Valentine.

MRR: You guys did "Summertime Blues" and "Something Else."

Edgar: Eddie Cochran. I love Eddie Cochran.

MRR: "Boom Boom," "Don't You Lie To Me."

Joe: When Sparky was in the band he did a version of Dion's "The Wanderer" when they opened for Pere Ubu.

MRR: Terry Riley.

Edgar: Yeah. We all went and saw Terry Riley once.

MRR: Somewhere in Toronto. We were sitting on cushions.

Edgar: Big red pillows. We all sat on the floor and he came out in his long white robes.

MRR: John Fahey.

Edgar: He was a big influence on me especially after Simply Sauter's demise in 1972. I started playing open-tuning, acoustic guitar finger-style stuff, and he was a big influence.

MRR: We all went to see John Fahey at the El Mocambo. One of the waitresses was Margarita Passion, Freddie Pompeii's wife. We had just come from

the Viletones the week before, and she was saying, "What the hell are you guys doing here?" One or two more—Hapshash and The Coloured Coat.

Edgar: You tell us all about that.

MRR: Okay. In the Carleton Place tape someone is requesting "Stairway to Heaven" and you say, "How about the Stooges?" and then you say, "How would you like to hear Hapshash and The Coloured Coat?"

Edgar: There was no response. They weren't being played on the radio I guess. The Gods?

Joe: Every ESP record.

MRR: So the first band broke up when you got booted from your rehearsal space on Kenilworth Avenue. Describe that time. What happened at that point?

Kevin: Well there were a lot of bad things that went down. Ed and I had our guitars ripped off, which kind of put us in a little bit of limbo for several months anyway and things started happening. The original band started disintegrating. Johnny lost interest. It is hard to say what happened with John.

MRR: Yeah, because he still hung around afterwards.

Kevin: He still hung around afterwards, but he eventually just walked out on the band. Then we got our eviction notice at Kenilworth and we started drifting. We didn't have any place to play or practice or anything like that.

MRR: Don had been in the band earlier, and he came back when you reformed.

Kevin: Yeah.

MRR: Which would be early '77, and that was when you got the house on Ferguson.

Kevin: Pretty well.

MRR: Let's talk about the house on Ferguson.

Joe: I met the band through Steve Parks, Sparky. He had just either quit Teenage Head or he had quit the Loved Ones, and I was at his basement in an affluent neighborhood in Hamilton. He had a giant basement with tons of musical instruments, so



MRR: That was their first ever show.

Joe: I got to play with them about ten years later.

Edgar: So you have played with both bands.

Joe: Yes, I have.

MRR: You played with the Forgotten Rebels in 1982, Joe, because there is a video. And you are not on any of their records. You are on their video.

Steve: Thank god for recorded medium so we can all remember what we were doing?

MRR: I just watched that because Steve Berman showed it to me.

Joe: Well, it's true what they say about the '80s. It's bad juju.

MRR: Okay, so more about the house. You were playing in the house almost every night. I remember going by there, and you could hear the music, and every night you would practice. You got really, really good by that point—some nights at least anyway. You got a whole lot of new songs, and somebody tell the story come on...

Edgar: I think we are unusual for the amount of practicing that we did. It's my understanding that a lot of the other bands didn't quite practice every day of the week as we did. We were kind of fanatical about it. I would get the whip out, round everybody up, and give them shit for taking a day off for Christmas or something like that. Kevin: Seven days a week. Christmas day. You name it. Edgar: Yeah, so we did get very tight. We probably overpracticed. You can do that too.

MRR: But songs came out of that.

Edgar: And the place just got a lot of visitors...

MRR: ...and trains.

Edgar: Yeah we had a train running right down the center of the street we lived on. Every time it went by, the house shook. Now and then we would ride the train and do crazy things.

Kevin: To the beer store.

MRR: That's right. You went down to the beer store.

Kevin: Down on Barton Street.

Joe: Hop off. Wait for the other train on the other track.



MRR: One of your guitarists, Alex, he heard your band when he was passing by and he walked in and joined the band in 1977.

Edgar: Alex was a very fine musician.

Kevin: He came along at kind of a transition point where there was just the three of us, and it was at that point with him joining that we became a four-piece, two guitar band. We stayed that way once Alex left and Sparky came on. He came up with some key ideas and motifs that we still use like "She's a Dog."

Edgar: "Lov. Profile," maybe too.

MRR: Where is he at now?

Kevin: The last I heard he was in Edmonton in the insurance game. He's an insurance man. That was in '85.

Dan: Well that was like twenty years ago.

Kevin: It's hard to say.

Edgar: I know the Poles threatened to kick his ass.

Kevin: They did?

Edgar: We did a gig with the Poles and Alex made some remarks, and I think the whole band was ready to chase him down.

MRR: Okay we are getting into the punk rock era here. I know that you never fit in anywhere. You didn't fit into punk rock either but you played with a lot of those bands.

Edgar: Well, Queen Street was where the punk scene was happening, and that just seemed to be the place to go. We had some influences that were similar because we were big fans of the Stooges and the Ramones. I guess there were a few others. Donnie liked a lot of the punk stuff. We thought, "We will go and play those clubs." So we retooled our sound a little and we took out some of the wiggly psychedelic stuff and we went for more of a hard-edged rock thing.

MRR: Most people haven't heard those songs because the only thing that was released was the "She's a Dog" record.

Edgar: Yeah right. By the time we played punk clubs in Toronto we had dropped a lot of those songs that had made it onto *Cyborgs Revisited*. The bands were really

unaware of what we had already accomplished, which in a way was frustrating because it was almost like we were starting over—breaking into that scene when we had played music in 1973-1974 that was actually a lot more out there. We had free jazz influences—a lot of improvising—you know Sun Ra and all that. We had really toned down our sound.

Kevin: Once we moved into Ferguson, and the house with Alex and then Sparky, everything switched.

Edgar: I think we wanted to survive and keep the band together.

There were not a lot of gigs. Managers sort of came and went. Gary Pig was managing us for a while. Then Joe, Joe: I was manager for about three gigs. I got you Guelph and Kitchener.

Edgar: But we were still hopeful. We were intending to record a full record, but there were a lot of personal kind of things with each and every one of us. There were substance abuse issues.

Kevin: There were a lot of distractions. Not enough focus. Not enough money for recording projects.

Edgar: There were scary people coming into our lives at that house. Some really scary kind of criminal elements. We were held up. I remember the one night the house got broken into. I had a machete on my neck with this guy threatening to kill me, which was the second time I had a knife on me. We were really starting to attract some unsavory elements.

Dan: Then Edgar agreed to let Steve into the band.

Edgar: Years later after doing his time. No we're just kidding. It was Dan, not Steve. We were falling apart. I've we were usually too drunk to really perform in the end. Kevin: It's too bad because there was a lot of good material that came out from those days despite all the distractions. There was some good stuff, but it never saw the light of day and probably won't unless Ed can remember it.

MRR: There were a few songs that made it to *Cyborgs Revisited* from demos and live shows. Again, that goes back to my question—is there any more old stuff coming out or being re-recorded for the new record?

Edgar: Some of it is going to be on *Half Human Half Liva*. Hopefully we will record again afterwards. It will be a mix.

MRR: So, onto the breakup in 1979, Sparky was the first to quit, then Kevin. Did you and Don plan to look for new band members?

Edgar: No.

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MRR: What was next?

Edgar: I wanted to buy an acoustic guitar and begin experimenting on my own and continue to write songs, but maybe a bit removed from the music biz itself. Things hadn't panned out. We had a good ten years trying to make this thing work, and I thought I had a good kick at the can. It was time to move onto something different. I had a whole pile of John Fahey records. I spent the next year just listening to him playing guitar. I bought an Alaskan guitar, which is made by Canadian guitar makers. Their guitars are recognized world wide as being some of the best acoustic guitars in the world. One of them is in the Canadian Museum of Civilization in Ottawa. Anyways, I sold all my gear and went to the Mill Wheel in Toronto, and I bought one of his guitars. I just fell in love with that guitar. I have been playing it ever since.

MRR: You still have the same guitar?

Edgar: Yeah.

MRR: There was a gap though before you started that.

Edgar: I was already detuning my electric guitar in *Simply Saucer*—just on my own, not with the band. I was beginning to experiment with that then. I thought I was going to hunker down in my cave and maybe eventually emerge into the light of day again, but I wasn't too confident that it was going to happen anytime soon. I was right about that. I just kept writing and playing on my own.

MRR: For a while, you say "on your own," but soon after all this happened—we are talking 1986—there's a video on YouTube of a band called the Third Kind, which is Edgar and Kevin, Kevin's brother Derek, and Dave Byers who was in the original *Simply Saucer*. And that sounds great. Would you like to talk about that group?

Kevin: As I recall, it came about because you and Dave met and played at your house, and you gave me a call. I came down with my bass and one thing led to another. My brother played drums. He filled that job.

MRR: He's a sound technician too, right?

Kevin: Yeah. He knows his sound.

MRR: One of the songs on YouTube is "Almost Ready Betty," which you used to do in the Saucer. It has a sort of

Edgar: Prove me a liar. I didn't have an electric guitar. I borrowed a guitar when we...

Kevin: It was your old guitar that you sold to my brother.

Edgar: Okay.

MRR: It definitely sounds like Edgar Breaux playing that stuff. You can check out YouTube to see. Again, the recording on that is quite nice. Are there any plans to release that?

Kevin: Not that I know of.

Edgar: If there is a record company out there that wants to do it, just contact us. Make us an offer.

Kevin: Some nice recordings came out of it. In addition to the two on YouTube there are two or three more that came out of those sessions.

Edgar: Dave Byers traveled through the south and discovered all these southern white gospel groups like the Statesmen Quartet, the Chuck Wagon Gang. He met Martha Carson who was an influence on Elvis Presley, sort of one of the first gospel singers that took this live thing over the top. Dave had some roots influences and I did as well. So that band was a little bit different than *Simply Saucer*, just in the influences we drew upon. Dave went on to form the Shangs who recorded some very fine CDs.

MRR: One of your later bands, the Shadows Of Ecstasy, played with the Shangs on the same gig.

Joe: There are a couple of Shangs videos on YouTube—Dave was playing with his video cam and spliced together some pretty cool stuff.

MRR: So we are trying to limit this interview to *Simply Saucer* a little bit more than the whole other career area. We have heard how Bruce Mowat released *Cyborgs Revisited* in 1989. How did you meet Bruce?

Edgar: I was playing at the Bay Tides cafe on an open stage and Bruce came by to listen, and we chatted after.

Edgar: Yeah. He is a very unique individual. He's tenacious. He deserves a lot of credit for getting us where we are. Even playing again.

MRR: Which sort of takes us up to the reunion of Edgar Breaux and his electric guitar, because Kevin's been in a lot of Edgar's bands over the years. You started bringing in some of the *Cyborgs* songs into your solo shows before you picked up the electric guitar again, and you had an electric guitarist to play those. You seemed to be more cult than *Saucer* ever was. You were getting less people at your gigs.

Edgar: I think at first I was looking to do my whole career as a solo artist, but eventually I began to realize that the *Saucer* songs were just better played the way



Don't get me wrong, I think slavery still was in kindergarten.

MR: Sparky played the September shows. He didn't rejoin?



Edgar: Well, Sparky is living in Montreal. It was just a travel problem with him.

Kevin: I think that Sparky very much wanted to rejoin, and be a part. Logistically it just wasn't going to work.

Steve: What show was that?

MRR: The Corktown.

Steve: Who else was on that bill?

Kevin: Viletones...members of the Diodes and...

Steve: ...You guys were starting because we were opening for Hugh Dillon across town, and he was being all surly, so we bailed on him. We walked in, and you guys were center stage. That was probably right around when we were doing all those tribute shows.

Edgar: Yeah. I have seen the Crawling King Snakes. They were my favorite act of the night. I went up and shook Paul's hand and told him how much I liked the show. You guys did "Oh Sweet Nothing." Great version of that.

MRR: So you're playing a festival in Montreal called Casa del Popolo, and also something else in Ottawa.

Steve: We are playing at Babylon.

Joe: With Plastic Crime Wave, I believe.

MRR: Do you know Plastic Crime Wave?

Edgar: No, not at all.

MRR: He does a magazine called Galactic Zoo Dossier, and it's all about all these sorts of bands. In one old issue, he has great guitarist trading cards, and one of the guitarists is Edgar Breaux.

Kevin: Cool. (round of applause)

Edgar: Get me that trading card.

Steve: I want the Edgar Breaux rookie card.

MRR: Is Sparky going to join those gigs to watch or play?

Kevin: Well, we should contact him for Montreal anyway. Love to have him join us on stage. I'm sure he would like to.

MRR: We only have about five minutes left. Is there anything else you want to put across? Anybody miss anything?

Kevin: We should that we are playing at the recording studio, and we are staging a concert that is in turn going to be recorded.

MRR: Where is that?

Kevin: Catherine North is at Park and Murray Street.

Dan: It is an old converted church.

MRR: And this is in Hamilton.

Kevin: In Hamilton.

Dan: What are the tickets worth?

Edgar: \$15 to \$20.

Joe: \$15 advance, \$20 at the door. There is room for sixty. Everybody in attendance will get their name on the CD, which is apparently what Bruce told me.

Edgar: Oh did he?

Joe: Yes.

Dan: Tracks from that will be used on the forthcoming CD.

Edgar: Once in a lifetime

opportunity. Come on out, Joe. I think it's going to be great. You're going to be in the same venue that we recorded in, and it's a very cool venue. It's an old church. The floor is made out of this old wood, and there is a good resonance in there. It will be a real fun gig to be at.

Edgar: Yeah, absolutely.

Dan: What song do you want to go out with?

MRR: I have another question here. Stephe always asks the bands—and I want to ask anybody except for Edgar and Kevin this first—what's your favorite Simply Saucer song from a lyrical standpoint and why? Who wants to try that one?

Joe: Mine is "Clearly Invisible" because lyrically it kind of reminds me of Kevin Ayers, and a bit of early Pink Floyd. You know, folkie Pink Floyd-like "La Vallee" or "More" or that kind of stuff.

Steve: I like the new one we did the other night, "Dandelion Kingdom." That's got some killer lyrics on it. That is just a nice vibe-y tune. And it's different for us.

Edgar: That's going to surprise a lot of people.

Dan: I like "Illegal Bodies" because it's a song of the future. (loads of laughter)

Joe: How are you going to follow that up?

Edgar: I like "Here Come the Cyborgs," because I like any song with cyborgs in the title.

Joe: Ed hasn't told you about this. This has all been designed as a grand scheme. Eventually, he will record the rock opera of the cyborgs. Everything is a stepping stone towards that.

MRR: How do you think your predictions of the future have panned out?

Edgar: Well, they are all coming true obviously. We are looking for a cyborg to join the band.

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